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(City Document.)—No. 1.

A D D R E S S

OF THE

HON. JOHN S. SLEEPER, MAYOR,

TO THE

CITY COUNCIL OF ROXBURY,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

TWO BRANCHES IN CONVENTION,

JANUARY 4, 1858.



PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

R O X B U R Y :
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1858.

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CITY OF ROXBURY.

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, Jan. 4, 1858.

ORDERED, That one thousand copies of the Address of His Honor the Mayor, be printed for the use of the City Council, and for distribution among the citizens.

Sent down for concurrence.

JOSEPH W. TUCKER, *City Clerk.*

IN COMMON COUNCIL, Jan. 11, 1858.

Concurred.

FRANKLIN WILLIAMS, *Clerk.*

A D D R E S S.

GENTLEMEN OF THE CITY COUNCIL:

WE have assembled here in the Council Chamber this day to inaugurate the City Government of Roxbury for the year 1858. Important duties have been confided to us by the free action of our fellow citizens, and we have taken a solemn oath to perform those duties to the best of our ability. It may be that the prosperity of our citizens and the honor of our City, for generations to come, will rest on the integrity and wisdom of our counsels and actions during the present year.

Within a few months a fearful crisis has occurred in financial operations and business relations of every description. This disturbing influence has not been confined to this community, or to this country. It has been heavily felt in all parts of the civilized world: and no class has been exempt from the melancholy results of this unprecedented and universal paralysis of business. The records of criminal Courts, Alms Houses and Charitable Institutions in all our large cities, present a terrible array of poverty and crime.

Our own good City has not been unscathed while the withering scourge has passed over the land. There has been an unusual amount of loss of property. There has been a curb to enterprise. Industry has not met with its due reward: and the suffering among the poorer classes

has been greater than in former years. Yet the condition of our City is far more favorable, in many respects, than that of other cities of equal population. And notwithstanding this sudden, but it is to be hoped temporary, check, while sweeping onward in the full tide of prosperity, let us not forget that we are in the enjoyment of many rich blessings, for which we should be grateful to a kind and benevolent Providence.

POLICE DEPARTMENT.

As our City increases in business and population, there must be, of course, a corresponding increase of crime; and the means of furnishing protection to the persons and property of our citizens, and preserving quiet and order, must also be increased. During the past few months, it is well known that crime has multiplied to an alarming extent, not only in this and the neighboring cities and towns, but in other places, owing in part, perhaps, to want and suffering, caused by a scarcity of employment for laboring men, and from an idea, which has become too prevalent of late, that the plea of poverty is an excuse for crime; also from the unwise laxity of our criminal laws, and the free exercise of the pardoning power. Indeed, it is found that in nearly all cases in which arrests have been made for heinous offences, the offenders have proved to be hardened criminals, and not a few have been objects of misplaced Executive clemency.

The expenses of the Police Department have of course been greater than in former years. But the general good order and quiet which have prevailed, notwithstanding the increased facilities for visiting our City by the establishment of the Metropolitan Railroad, and the promptitude with which offenders against the laws have been arrested and brought to justice, furnish strong proof of the administrative ability and fidelity of our City Marshal and his Assistants, as well as of the efficiency of the system and regulations of the Police Department.

It is seen by recurring to the Police Reports for the year, that the crime of Drunkenness stands at the head of the list of offences; the number of arrests for that offence having been 404, while the whole number of arrests was 893. But the amount of wretchedness and crime of a different and more awful description caused by intemperance, is not introduced into the schedule. It is left for the imagination, and presents a frightful picture.

The increase of liquor shops and "lager bier" establishments, where the vilest kinds of spirituous liquors are sold, has undoubtedly been great during the past year, not only in this City, but in all the large towns and cities in the State. It is much to be regretted that our laws, although stringent and severe, according to the letter, seem to be inadequate for the suppression of these laboratories of iniquity. And it is well worthy your attention whether some plan can not be devised, which may remedy this deficiency, and diminish these evils; whether the City Government should not come forward and shield the Police authorities from personal liabilities, in all well-directed efforts to lessen, at least, the number of these nurseries of crime and pauperism.

THE POOR AND ALMSHOUSE.

The appointment by the Overseers of the Poor of an Agent, to receive and investigate all applications from the suffering and the destitute, for relief during the winter months, and minister to the wants of those who are entitled to assistance, is found to be productive of much good. A more uniform and judicious system of outside relief, applications for which during the present season are unusually numerous, is thus established.

The Overseers of the Poor are chosen by the citizens of each ward for the execution of important duties. They are invested with large discretionary powers; and the comfort of the poor and the interests of the City, are to a

certain extent, dependent on their humanity, discretion and firmness. The Mayor is Chairman of the Board of Overseers, and is brought in frequent connection with that body. He takes part in their discussions and in all their proceedings, and a link is thus very properly established between an independent branch of the Government and the City Council. This connection, it is obvious, must be attended with many advantages, and will be likely to lead to prompt and judicious action on the part of the City Government, whenever any action may be deemed expedient by the Overseers of the Poor for the amelioration of the condition of that unfortunate class of our population.

During the year 1857, the number of inmates of the Alms House has hardly exceeded the number in previous years, the greatest number at any one time having been 28. The health of the inmates has been generally good: no epidemic has prevailed among them: and only two deaths have occurred during the year. Their wants have been well cared for, and a cheerful home has been thus provided for those, who, destitute of means, and unable by age, infirmity, or extreme youth, to gain a livelihood by labor, have undoubted claims on the city for a comfortable living.

THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Our Fire Department is an important branch of the public service. It is maintained at a great expense. But its services, in times of emergency, cannot be over-estimated. It has been well managed during the year, and has exhibited on every proper occasion a degree of promptitude and efficiency, unsurpassed in any city of the Union. For this our citizens are indebted to the care, attention, and ability displayed by the Chief Engineer and his Assistants, and to the zeal, courage, and emulative spirit manifested by the members of the Fire Department.

During the year, the means of protecting the property

of our citizens from the ravages of the devouring element, have been greatly increased. Five hydrants have been placed in the main pipe of the Jamaica Pond Aqueduct in various parts of the City. Two hydrants, by permission of the Water Commissioners, have been inserted in the Cochituate Water Pipe, in Tremont Street; and three large Reservoirs, at points remote from each other, have been constructed.

The number of alarms of fire during the year 1857, was 53; the amount of property destroyed, amounted to \$27,675; and the amount of insurance on the above property was \$16,835. During the year 1856, there were 82 alarms of fire; total loss, \$36,710; insurance, \$18,346.

The incidental expenses of the Fire Department, during the year, have been large; and it would be well to ascertain if any mode of diminishing the expenditures of this department, without injuring its efficiency, can be devised. By the establishment of Reservoirs and Hydrants, judiciously located, it is believed that, in cases of fire, water in abundance may be easily and quickly obtained in any populous district; and it is to be hoped that further expenses for such objects will be comparatively *nominal* for some years to come. The Engines and apparatus are believed to be generally in good condition, and the several Engine Houses are in no need of extensive repairs.

In making up the rolls of the Engine Companies, care and discrimination should be used: and an important duty devolves upon the Board of Engineers, as well as the Board of Aldermen, who are called upon to act upon the names laid before them for approval. Many of the members of our Companies, it is well known, are men of character and substance: bold, faithful and efficient, when the alarm of fire is given, and at the same time, and at all times, good and exemplary citizens. Such men can always be obtained; and of such men should our Engine Companies be exclusively composed. Idle and dissipated men, with

equivocal reputations; loungers about the Engine Houses, equally ready for a run with the Engine, a drunken frolic or a *row*, are not the kind of men to be depended on when daring resolution and energetic action are required; nor are they the kind of men who should be entrusted with the City's property.

THE COMMON SCHOOLS.

The City of Roxbury has always been liberal in regard to our common schools—those promoters of intelligence, which must be regarded as the corner stone of a good and a wise government. The general excellence of our schools has for many years been a source of gratification and pride to every citizen. Our City authorities have cheerfully aided in their support, in accordance with public opinion, which has demanded schools for the people of a high character, where children of every class can be freely admitted, properly trained, and insured educational advantages as great at least as can be found in any other populous city or town.

Our School Houses are many, commodious and well situated; our Teachers are able and well qualified, and the means provided and moneys expended for education in Roxbury, are believed to be as large as in any other City, in proportion to the number of children attending school. During the past year the expenses of our Schools, including the construction and repairs of school houses, have amounted to the sum of \$50,024, while the whole amount appropriated for the expenses of the government during the financial year, was \$142,160.

The duties of the Board of School Committee, are disconnected with other branches of the City Government. That body has the authority to make all the needful rules and regulations: regulate the incidental expenses, and fix the salaries of Teachers; and, being elected by the people for these duties, are responsible to the people for their

acts. Nevertheless, owing to circumstances connected with the annual examination of our Public Schools the past year, it may be a proper subject of enquiry on the part of the City Council, whose duty it is to watch carefully the finances of the government, as well as to look closely after all the interests of the inhabitants, whether the instruction in our Public Schools is uniformly of that high and useful character of which we may well be proud, corresponding to the reasonable expectations of the public, and the liberal appropriations of the government.

Our citizens are entitled to the best possible instruction for their children; and if it should be made evident that the present system of education in our schools is too simple and imperfect to meet the requirements of the age in which we live; or is so overburdened with unnecessary studies, complicated rules, and doubtful theories, as to weaken the whole system, and disappoint the justifiable wishes and hopes of parents; if any dangerous errors can be checked, or unnecessary expenses avoided; if it is evident that a single head, armed with executive power, acting under the direction of the School Committee as a Superintendent, a plan which has worked well in other places, will prove advantageous here, it is undoubtedly the duty of the City Council to recommend such measures, and to take such action as the public good may require.

A FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Within a few years, some of our sister cities have established Free Public Libraries for the benefit of the whole population; or, in other words, a small portion of the people's money in each of those cities has been expended by the chosen agents of the people, for an object calculated, emphatically and exclusively, for the comfort, advantage and elevation of the whole people. Following these noble examples, an effort was made during the past year to es-

tablish a Free Public Library in this good City of Roxbury, "whose privileges should be as free as air, as universal as our population"—and thus add materially to the many noble institutions and advantages which our citizens now enjoy. The one hundred and sixty proprietors of the Roxbury Athenæum, an institution comprising seven thousand valuable volumes, with a degree of disinterestedness and public spirit that is above all praise, agreed, one and all, to surrender their shares to the City without any remuneration, and on such just and reasonable conditions as would have secured the permanent establishment of the institution.

The details of a plan were prepared by the Joint Committee on Public Instruction, and laid before the City Government, and which, if adopted, would have secured to the City for many years, at a comparatively small annual expense, a fountain of intellectual riches, a well-spring of knowledge, from which all who were thirsty might have drank. The plan was not carried into effect. A regard to economy, at a time when our physical wants were numerous and pressing, caused the proposition to be rejected, and the golden opportunity to establish a Free Public Library in the City of Roxbury, was lost.

May we not hope that another attempt, on a different plan, and under different auspices, will ere long be made to endow our city with the blessings of books—blessings which cannot be too highly prized! May we not hope that some wealthy and noble-minded son or citizen of Roxbury, a friend to knowledge and a lover of mankind, will come forward, and by a liberal donation aid the city in the establishment of an institution, which, under proper direction, must be productive of incalculable good; and thus entitle himself to the gratitude of the present and future generations!

FOREST HILLS CEMETERY.

The Cemetery at Forest Hills is one of those Institutions to which it may be proper for me to allude on this occasion. It must be gratifying to every citizen of Roxbury, to feel that under the guidance of an intelligent Board of Commissioners, every year adds to its attractions and value. Its location, and other natural advantages, as well as the judicious manner in which the grounds are laid out and embellished, make it a fit and beautiful resting-place for the dead.

It is also gratifying to learn, that the income from the sale of lots continues on the increase, and gives promise that the whole debt, \$36,000, for the purchase of the property, will be liquidated in a few years: it having been reduced from \$21,000 at the close of 1856, to \$17,000 at the close of 1857.

Many of the tombs in the old Burial Grounds in this City, continue to be held and used by the proprietors, as depositories for the dead. Slowly, one by one, they are abandoned, and their contents transferred to some rural lot in Forest Hills or Mount Auburn. And it is to be hoped and wished that the time will soon arrive, when all these unsightly receptacles of mortality will be abandoned and their contents removed, that the grounds in which they are now placed may be rendered more pleasant and attractive to the living.

And surely the associations connected with a rural Cemetery like Forest Hills, with trees waving over the graves, flowers planted on the borders, birds singing in the branches, and people wandering through the pathways and enjoying the combined beauties of nature and art, are far more cheerful and holy than the associations called up by the dark and dreary, solitary tomb—such as may be seen in the burial places in the very heart of our City.

IMPROVEMENTS OF HIGHWAYS.

Among the various expenses of a City like Roxbury, the amount expended upon the repairs of Highways, and the widening and improvement of streets and sidewalks, forms no inconsiderable item. This is an expenditure which is asked for by every citizen, as conducing greatly to the comfort of the inhabitants; and while a liberal policy should be adopted, prudence and discrimination should characterize all operations connected with the highways. The calls from no part of the City should be neglected—and all improvements should be made with an eye to the future, as well as present accommodation of the people.

The whole amount appropriated the past year for these objects was \$16,000, and it was then believed that this amount might prove sufficient to defray all the ordinary expenses; but some important items were not anticipated and included in the estimate; among them the grading, repairing, and, in many places, widening the travelling portions of Centre, Lowell and Tremont streets, for the establishment of the West Roxbury and Metropolitan Railroad, extending from the boundary line at West Roxbury, to the Boston line.

In consequence of these, and other unexpected demands for improvements and repairs, further large appropriations were necessary, making the whole amount thus far appropriated, \$24,000.

There has been a large amount of edgestones set, sidewalks constructed, and gutters paved in different parts of the city. The number of feet of edgestones laid is 13,106; and gutters paved to correspond, in addition to the paving of that portion of Bartlett street now called Guild Row, and the square in front of the Post Office; of crossings laid for the accommodation of foot passengers, there were 997 yards; and various culverts have been constructed and repaired, and bank walls built; all of which were required for the benefit of the public.

As the setting of the edgestones is supposed to establish the grade of a street, in some cases it has been found necessary to "fill in" to a very considerable extent, and thus raise the centre of the highway to correspond with the sidewalk. Expensive undertakings of this kind, even when they may not seem absolutely necessary, can hardly be avoided when applied for, inasmuch as it has been a rule, for some years, for the Surveyors of Highways to set the edgestones, whenever they should be furnished by the abutters, construct and gravel the sidewalks, and grade the streets to correspond.

The "Order" making it thus obligatory on the part of the government to set curbstones at the City's expense, wherever and whenever requested, provided the stones are furnished, was adopted at a time when it was highly desirable that our streets should be improved by the construction of sidewalks. That Order has accomplished its object: and its repeal—a discretionary power being of course vested in the Surveyors of Highways—might save a very considerable expense to the City.

The Horse Railroads passing through our principal streets are undoubtedly a great public convenience. But besides causing a great expense when first established, by the grading and crowning of the streets through which the tracks are laid, it is found by experience, that by forcing the travel on each side the track, they cause a great and serious wear and tear of the highways, which thus require frequent and extensive repairs. It will doubtless be found expedient, in accordance with true economy, to pave the travelling portions of those streets, if not immediately, as soon as it can be effected without draining too heavily on the City Treasury.

During the past year a great amount of work has been done upon our highways; and whatever has been undertaken has been thoroughly done. And although repairs are even now required in some of our principal streets, and

will demand the attention of the government, so soon as the season will permit, yet the streets and highways of Roxbury will compare favorably with the streets and highways of any city or town in the vicinity.

As our city becomes populous, and business increases, and the communication between Boston and the towns in Norfolk County becomes more frequent, the wear of our streets must also increase, and the necessary repairs of highways will continue to constitute a very large portion of the City expenses.

It has been found expedient during the past year, to widen certain streets by taking land belonging to the abutters. These parcels of land being generally in thickly settled parts of the City, are justly regarded as valuable; and such improvements, although desirable, and in some cases necessary, are effected at very considerable cost. A prospective line for the widening of Washington street, easterly of Williams street, and adjoining the Sumner estate, was established some years ago. The land, however, has not yet been taken for that purpose, but it cannot be doubted that whenever this improvement can be carried into effect, the result will be beneficial to the City. A prospective line for straightening the eastern side of Washington street, between Sumner and Eustis streets, was also established some years ago, and improvements by widening the street in conformity with that line have been made the past season.

A prospective line has also been adopted for widening Tremont street, on the westerly side, which will make that important public avenue of an uniform width of eighty feet. Parcels of land have already been taken for that purpose. This alteration will be very expensive, and must be a work of years.

During the year, that portion of Brush Hill Turnpike which is in Roxbury, has been thrown open as a public highway, by the County Commissioners, and its boundaries

defined. It has been fully repaired by the city. Whether it is expedient at the present time to widen the street according to the line given, is a question for your consideration.

The Commissioners have also thrown open the Bristol and Norfolk Turnpike, defined its boundaries, and imposed upon Roxbury the task of completing the highway, and giving it a proper grade. This work has not been commenced, but cannot be long delayed, as the street is in a wretched condition. Considerable time will probably elapse, and much money be expended, before it can be completed in conformity with the plan proposed.

The extension of Shawmut Avenue in Boston across the marshes in Roxbury and through Williams and Winslow streets to its junction with the Turnpike, has also been laid out by the Commissioners, and a limited time has been appointed for the acceptance of this important work, which has been commenced and is in rapid progress.

An important avenue has also been opened by direction of the County Commissioners between Roxbury and Brookline, by widening a street lately known as Oak or Pilgrim street, in Oakland Place, to the extent of fifty feet, and building a substantial wooden bridge across Longwood Creek—formerly Muddy Brook—connecting with new and commodious highways in Brookline, leading in different directions. This bridge has been built by the Town of Brookline and the City of Roxbury, and the avenue, which has been called Longwood Avenue, is now open for public travel. This avenue can be continued easterly in a direct line, across the lands of Eben. Francis and others, and through Ward street to Parker street, thence to Tremont street. And it is highly probable that within a few years, the public good will require the extension of this highway.

Measures have also been taken for the immediate extension of Water street from Williams street to Washington street, an improvement which has for years

been loudly called for, and which will undoubtedly be a vast benefit to Roxbury, opening an important avenue between two populous sections of the City. Applications have been made for the extension of other streets in different parts of the City, some of which, involving a considerable expense, will in all likelihood command the attention of the City Council.

SEWERAGE.

There is one other subject, involving a serious expense, which is vitally important to the inhabitants of Roxbury. Indeed, it rises up from the very ground, and forces itself upon the notice of the public. I mean the subject of sewerage. The time has arrived when some efficient and properly digested plan should be, at least, devised, if not carried into immediate operation, for furnishing proper underground drainage for all the populous portions of our City.

The subject has already attracted the attention of the government: and a regard to health, as well as comfort, requires some decided action. Otherwise our soil will be impregnated with impurities: and our wells, which now furnish abundance of fresh water of excellent quality, will become poisoned and unfit for use. Our City is so situated, that there appears to be no physical obstacle in the way of a thorough and complete system of *Sewerage*. The expense will undoubtedly be large, but a considerable portion of this expense should be borne by the owners of those estates which are directly benefitted. If any additional legislation is necessary for carrying such a project into effect, the proper steps should be taken at once for securing such legislation.

LAWSUITS AND THE BACK BAY LANDS.

During the past year the City has been engaged in several lawsuits, generally as defendants, and the results have been to a very considerable extent satisfactory, and show

that while the government has been unwilling to submit to unjust or exorbitant demands from any quarter, it feels under obligations to recognize the reasonable or just claims of every citizen. Several cases that have been pending for years, have been dismissed from our Courts, and others, among which we may perhaps include the indictment found at the instance of the City against the Chemical Company as a nuisance, are in the most favorable positions for trial. For this we are greatly indebted to the labors and counsels of the City Solicitor, to whom also the City authorities, during the two last years, are under great obligations for opinions and advice on various subjects, intimately connected with the public interest.

The cases most important to the interests of Roxbury, which have engaged the attention of our legal tribunals during the year, are actions brought by the State of Massachusetts and the Boston Water Power Company, to dispossess Roxbury of her claim to seventy-two acres of land in the Back Bay. The value of the property thus disputed, owing to its local advantages, is considerable, amounting, at a very low valuation, to some hundreds of thousands of dollars; and it was deemed advisable by the City Government to spare no labor or expense in resisting claims to territory, which beyond a reasonable doubt belonged to Roxbury, and the fee of which had been in Roxbury, or in individuals, for more than two hundred and twenty years; even though the attempt to wrest it from its lawful possessor should be made by a wealthy Corporation, and the Commonwealth itself, armed with majesty and power. The case, in which the State was a party, was by order of the Court, submitted to a referee. The Hon. Marcus Morton was selected as that referee, who, after a very full and protracted hearing, decided the question in favor of Roxbury. Certain questions, however, remain to be decided by the Supreme Court—and there is reason to expect that

a final decision in this case, so important to the interests of this City, will be made in the course of a few months.

ANNEXATION TO BOSTON.

The subject of the Annexation of Roxbury to Boston, which has heretofore been agitated in this community, has again been brought to the attention of the inhabitants. In compliance with a petition from a large body of our citizens, the question on the bare subject of annexation was submitted to the voters at the late municipal election.

This subject of Annexation is one touching the dearest interests of the people, and one on which the people are expected to act; and the government are bound to carry out the wishes of the people, upon any subject of importance to the community, whenever those wishes are clearly and decidedly indicated.

On this occasion the whole number of votes for municipal officers was 2096. On the question of annexation, only 1570 were given, viz:—808 yeas, and 762 nays, showing a majority of 46 only in favor of the project. The comparatively small number of votes given on this question, shows that it is regarded with indifference by a considerable portion of the inhabitants, or that many have not sufficiently examined the subject, to form an intelligent opinion: and the small *affirmative* majority of those who voted on the question, can hardly be supposed to warrant any further immediate action on the part of the City authorities.

THE ELECTION IN WARD THREE.

Certain proceedings in Ward Three, in connection with our late Municipal election, have excited the public attention, and were brought to the notice of the Board of Aldermen. But, on investigation, it was found, that admitting irregularities had occurred at the election, and the legal forms and requisitions had not been complied with on the part of the

Ward Officers, that Board has no power to declare the election void, and order another.

By the City Charter, the Board of Aldermen, and the Common Council, are respectively made judges of the election of members of their own bodies, and when a vacancy is declared in either branch, it is the duty of the Board of Aldermen to order a new election. But this mode of correcting a mistake does not apply to the members of the School Committee or the Overseers of the Poor; and by the negligence, incapacity or fraud of officers presiding at elections, the will of the people, which is the foundation of a republican government, may be defeated. A slight amendment to the City Charter would provide a remedy for such evils, which can hardly occur provided the duties of those who regulate the doings of the ballot box are duly and faithfully performed. These duties are of the most important character. Those who undertake them, accept a solemn trust, the neglect or abuse of which may involve consequences of the most serious description.

THE PUBLIC EXPENSES.

It will be seen, by statements that I have made in other portions of this address, that the annual expenses of the City Government have been large during the present financial year. Unexpected circumstances have increased the expenses beyond the amount anticipated at the beginning of that period, and the City debt, which it was hoped would be diminished, has been slightly increased.

It is true that the public improvements, and increase of comfort to our citizens, consequent on this increased expenditure of the public funds, will increase in a corresponding ratio the value of property; and may and probably will prove of great permanent advantage to the City; but the wisdom of a policy may well be doubted, which establishes improvements, the expenses of which must be met

by increasing a public debt already large, or by imposing an onerous tax upon the people.

On the 1st of January, 1857, the City debt amounted to \$241,865: on the first of January, 1858, it was \$242,340, being an increase of \$475, while our available resources, exclusive of the property known as the Back Bay Lands, the Alms House property, the City Hall, School Houses, &c., and consisting principally of land, and notes secured by mortgages, may be estimated at about \$80,000.

Besides the unlooked for increased expenditures during the present year for widening streets, repairing highways, schools and school-houses, police, pauperism, fire department, lighting the streets, &c., there have been appropriated for the construction of Shawmut Avenue, the sum of three thousand dollars: for defending the suit in relation to the Back Bay Lands, about \$3000, and three thousand dollars for the construction of this City's portion of the bridge over Longwood Creek, and completing Longwood Avenue. The State tax has also been increased from \$13,224 in 1856, to \$19,836 in 1857—an increase of \$6,612. The County tax also adds \$15,377 to our annual expenses, and with the State tax making an aggregate of \$35,213.

The large expenditures during the past year in every department of government, taken in connection with the present condition of our finances, should admonish us in tones to make a deep and constant impression on every mind, of the importance of prudence and rigid economy during the present year in the management of the public business.

We every day see illustrations of the fact that but little talent or financial skill is needed for devising and executing expensive schemes for the public good. But the history of states, as well as cities and towns, teach that no small degree of ingenuity and firmness is required on the part of a government to confine the expenses within just and reasonable limits, by resisting pressing applications

for comforts and conveniences, which, although desirable, are not necessary.

There can be no question that many valuable improvements may be suggested with regard to our streets and highways, which would add greatly now and hereafter to the accommodation of the public. Great avenues might be laid out and opened: public squares established, noble parks planted: fountains introduced: statues erected to the memory of eminent men: a cordon of police officers posted in every street, and a gas lamp placed in front of every dwelling. But these things are not necessary. And although posterity might admire the noble and self-sacrificing spirit which dictated such a course of proceeding, yet we should bear in mind that our City is largely in debt: and that these improvements must increase that debt, or be paid for from the pockets of people now living. Let these luxuries of civilization be introduced only as they may be warranted by the state of the treasury, recollecting that perfection should not be looked for at once—"Rome was not built in a day." Besides, something should remain to be accomplished by those who come after us.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

And now, Gentlemen, having given you an exposition of the condition of the affairs of the City, allow me to say that unless some unlooked for event should take place, which will shake to its foundation the business community, and revolutionize society, our good City must continue to go on and prosper. We now enjoy many positive blessings. Our population is rapidly increasing: dwelling houses and manufacturing sites are in demand: the Metropolitan Railroad, as a desirable mode of communication with Boston, is found to equal, at least, the expectations of the community: and all the advantages of a large and well regulated City, with schools, academies, churches, subscription libraries, social institutions, a vigilant police, gas lights,

and soft water, together with the pure air and quiet of a country town—and all within two miles of the very heart of the Metropolis—offer solid advantages which I scruple not to say are found in no other place in the Commonwealth.

Gentlemen, we have recently passed through an exciting election for municipal officers. Party spirit has been rife: and a more acrimonious feeling, approaching to personal animosity, has been roused than has ever before been witnessed at our municipal elections. You, gentlemen, represent the different political parties now existing in the Commonwealth; but it is earnestly to be hoped that party spirit will not enter these halls; that harmony of action will characterize all our proceedings; that every member of the City Government will forget he is a member of a party; and remember only that he is a citizen of Roxbury, sent here by the people, to look after the interests of the people.

And, Gentlemen, standing here in this honorable position, to which I have been elected by my fellow citizens: on the broad platform on which I have always stood—untrammelled and independent—pledged only to devote my time and the humble talents I possess, to the promotion of the interests of the City, irrespective of party feeling, sectional or sectarian prejudices: I look to you all—and I feel that I shall not look in vain—for judicious counsels and zealous assistance in the performance of my official duties.

And, while we thus act together, prompted by the noble wish to fulfil faithfully and conscientiously the important trust confided to us by our fellow citizens, let us never for a moment forget that the blessings of an Almighty Power will rest upon actions which are founded in wisdom and virtue.









